

Senator Justin Smith Morrill House
Strafford
Orange County
Vermont

HABS No. VT-55

HABS
VT
9- STRAF,
2-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

SENATOR JUSTIN SMITH MORRILL HOUSE

HABS VT.
9. STRAFF
2.

Location: Strafford, Orange County, Vermont (on only street in village)

Present Owner: Miss Elizabeth Sullivan, 36 Lebanon Street,
Hanover, New Hampshire

Present Occupant: The owner

Present Use: Summer Home

Brief Statement of Significance: The home of Senator Justin Smith Morrill and, in a strongly personal Gothic Revival Style, an example of an unusual building type for this area.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: Owned by Senator Morrill until his death in 1898. The present owner bought the house in 1938.
2. Date of erection: 1848.
3. Architect: Senator Morrill
4. Notes on alterations and additions: The house appears to be essentially unchanged, and is full of Senator Morrill's own furnishings.
5. Reference: William Belmont Parker, The Life and Public Services of Justin Smith Morrill (Boston, 1924), p. 51, ill, facing p. 18.

- B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure: Justin Smith Morrill who served forty-four continuous years in the House and Senate, conceived and brought to passage the Morrill Act which through governmental aid led directly to the establishment of our entire present system of state-supported agricultural, scientific and industrial schools of college rank. The Strafford, Vermont, Historical Society is negotiating to buy the house at the time of this writing in order to preserve it as a historic site.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: According to his biographer, Senator Morrill designed this house himself. It is a loosely organized, personal expression of the prevailing Gothic Revival style, and apparently survives unaltered.
2. Condition of fabric: The structure is sound and moderately well maintained.

B. Technical Description of Exterior:

1. Layout: Moderately large frame house, one and one half stories plus cellar, irregular layout with projecting front bay and rear ell.
2. Foundation: Brick.
3. Wall construction: Wood frame, flush wood siding.
4. Porches: Three wood porches with various kinds of sawed and carved ornamental details.
5. Chimneys: Three brick chimneys.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Four panel entrance door with sidelights with diamond shaped tracery. French doors lead to porch on south side. Paneled rear door.
 - b. Windows: Double hung or casement windows in various arrangements including bay windows, dormers, paired windows. Window frames vary from simple moulded frames to heavily overlaid, carved Gothic frames.
7. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Steep gable roof over most of structure, flat roof over other parts. Gabled roof with sheet metal, tin tile, covering.

VT.
9-STRAE
21

- b. Cornice, eaves: Sawed or carved verge boards on gabled roof with projecting finials at the peaks. Flat roof with crenelated parapets and turrets.
- c. Dormers: Two small dormers on southwest side with sawed verge boards and small finials.

C. Technical Description of Interiors:

- 1. Floor plans: Center hall with stairway, rooms either side, projecting library and living room. Bedrooms on second floor. Total of sixteen rooms.
- 2. Stairways: Two.
- 3. Flooring: Wood flooring, largely carpeted.
- 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster, painted or papered.
- 5. Doors: Various types, mostly paneled with two slender, vertical Gothic panels.
- 6. Trim: Wood trim varies with each room. Gothic forms used throughout the house except the main parlor which has Greek Revival trim with elaborately carved acanthus ornament.
- 7. Hardware: Brass
- 8. Lighting: Some of the original lighting fixtures wired for electricity.
- 9. Heating: Four fireplaces.

D. Site

- 1. General setting and orientations: House faces west on a large lot that rises moderately steeply from the street. This is the only street in a very small, rural village.

VT
9-STRAF
2-

2. Enclosures: Gothic, wood fence across front of lot.
3. Landscaping: Informal, lawn trees, shrubs. Largely overgrown.

Prepared by Osmund R. Overby and
Henry C. Edwards
Architects
National Park Service
September 1959